

MANAGING THE END OF THE CRUSH



The crushing season this year is estimated to finish late December, with Mackay Sugar still intending to crush the full crop if it's able to be delivered to the factories. To prepare for the potential of harvesting late this season with the risk of wet weather, growers should consider which paddocks are accessible and able to be harvested following wet weather. Harvesting of the full crop should remain the priority over standover. However, standover remains a possibility and to assist in preparations for such a development, consider the following factors:



CROP CONDITION

- Select an erect, healthy crop that has the potential to grow on to produce more cane in the following year. A low-yielding poor crop is not a good choice for standover.
 - An erect crop without pest damage will also have a better chance of producing a better quality standover crop than a heavily lodged crop.
 - Heavily lodged crops generally tend to deteriorate over the wet season, resulting in reduced tonnage and cane quality the following year.
 - If possible, avoid standing over plant cane. However, for plant cane blocks you may also have to consider the impact of harvesting damage on ratooning especially if the block is very wet at harvest time.
- If varieties have arrowed, it is better to select the one showing side shoots (i.e. some early maturing high CCS varieties may arrow heavily and won't produce side shoots).
 - Varieties prone to snapping, such as SP80 are at higher risk of wind damage in the event of a storm or cyclone.
 - It is unknown how the newer varieties such as Q253^Φ, SRA9^Φ, SRA12^Φ, SRA13^Φ, SRA21^Φ and SRA22^Φ will perform as standover crops, however if the crop is heavily lodged it needs to be targeted for harvest this crush.
 - Q208^Φ and Q183^Φ were the better performing varieties from the 2016/17 standover crop, with Q138, Q242^Φ and SP80 suffering yield losses due to crop deterioration. While Q240^Φ didn't suffer from crop deterioration, the variety recorded very low CCS levels due to the heavy suckering.

VARIETY SELECTION

- A variety that has not arrowed heavily is generally more suited for standover. Some heavily arrowing varieties tend to lose mature stalk populations, and the harvestable crop the following season will have predominantly arisen from sucker growth.

PESTS AND DISEASES

- Try to avoid blocks with moderate to severe canegrub, pig or rat damage as cane quality will deteriorate over the wet season and pest numbers may significantly increase.

BLOCK CONDITIONS

- If possible, avoid blocks adjacent to bad rat harbourage areas.
- Poorly drained blocks are generally inferior for standover. Very wet and waterlogged conditions cause deterioration of the old stalks and restrict sucker growth.

FORWARD PRICING

- Consider how much of the crop you have forward priced in comparison to what you have already harvested.
- Consider the forward price you have obtained compared with the season pool.
- Your representative at QSL and/or QCS will be able to assist you in understanding your forward pricing commitments for this season and next.

Because every situation is different, growers are encouraged to speak to their MAPS Productivity Officer or SRA about their particular situation.